



Diocese of Green Bay PRESBYTERAL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES January 27, 2016

Attendees: Bishop David Ricken, Very Reverends Daniel Felton and Thomas Long, Monsignor James Dillenburg, Reverends Richard Allen, Jason Blahnik, Ron Colombo, Robert Kabat, Robert Kollath, James Leary, OFM Cap., Joel Sember, Matthew Settle, Timothy Shillcox, O. Praem.

Excused: Reverend Thomas Reynebeau

Opening Activities

- Meeting opened at 10:05 a.m.
- Bishop Ricken led the Council members in the Liturgy of the Hours.
- Father Matt Settle solicited changes or additions to the agenda. Motion was made to approve the agenda as presented. Motion was seconded and approved unanimously.
- A motion was made to approve and adopt the meeting minutes of the November 10, 2015 meeting as written. Motion was seconded and approved unanimously.
- Mission statement was recited by Council members.

Bishop's Opening Comments

Bishop began by expressing his gratitude for the participation of the priests at the recent listening sessions. He has read each written comment and is taking the feedback very seriously. He feels the listening sessions have already borne fruit and is encouraged by the unanimity expressed by the priests to move forward with missionary discipleship. This journey will take time but feels we are now better able to move the Diocese in one direction with a common purpose.

The Diocese has undertaken a review of our Information Technology (IT) infrastructure and is currently undergoing an assessment by an outside company. A recent survey sent to the parishes has also provided helpful information. Our aim is to help each parish according to its specific needs and not to assume what is helpful to a larger parish would also be helpful to a smaller, rural parish.

The Diocese is also undertaking a study of our Catholic schools by the Meitler group. This group of consultants has a good track record working with numerous dioceses and also has experience helping rural schools. The study will assess our diocesan structure, the needs and strengths of our schools, resource sharing, networking, and will include consultation with pastors and school leaders. The initial phase of the study will conclude in June. The consultations with pastors and school leaders will begin in September with implementation of the study recommendations taking effect in the fall of 2017. The overall goal is to strengthen and support our schools in their efforts to be schools of discipleship, academic excellence, and Catholic moral values which will be attractive to parents and families. Information about the Meitler study will be in the February issue of *Parish Pages*.

Both the IT and Catholic School studies are being paid for by resources outside of the Bishop's Appeal and the Cathedraticum.

Update on Ill Priests

Fr. Tom Long reported on priests and deacons who are ill or recovering from surgery.

Support and Benefits for Priests and Pastoral Leaders

While the complete guidelines for the Support and Benefits for Priests and Pastoral Leaders are not ready for publication because of a review being done by our Benefits Coordinator, Father Tom distributed the salary guidelines portion with the recommendation of an average increase in wages of 2.5% for 2016/17. The remainder of the document will be brought to the next meeting for discussion and approval. However, it is important the parishes receive the salary increase information to aid in their budget planning.

After some discussion, a motion was made to approve the 2.5% recommended wage increase for priests, pastoral leaders, and pastoral coordinators. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Grellinger Hall

Father Tom Long reported that after a number of our priests moved to McCormick Home or nursing homes because of a need for increased care, there are now 5-6 vacancies at Grellinger Hall. There was a lengthy discussion about how Grellinger Hall is perceived by the priests of the Diocese, many indicating they feel it is a place to reside when they can no longer live on their own. That is not the intent of Grellinger Hall; it is independent apartment living but offers the advantage of living in community with other priests and also can provide additional services if the priest so desires.

Some ideas from the discussion:

- make Grellinger Hall an assisted living facility as it seems to be perceived;
- keep Grellinger Hall an independent living facility but also add the assisted living component so a priest does not have to move when further assistance is needed;
- strive to build a stronger sense of "community" among the priest residents and offer intellectual and spiritual programming

Members felt Grellinger Hall is a good idea and recommended moving ahead with the next stage of conversation.

Marriage Enrichment Program

Deacon Tony Abts, at the request of Bishop Ricken, met with the deacons of the Diocese to request their involvement with marriage enrichment in our parishes. This would not be a new program but a ministry of the deacons.

Diocesan data indicates there were 50% fewer weddings in 2013 than in 2000 but the actual number of Catholics in the Diocese has increased since 2000. Also, 68% of Catholic parents do not have their children enrolled in Catholic school or any religious education program.

Sociologist David Lapp, who has researched millennials and their attitudes toward traditional marriage, spoke to a gathering of our deacons. Research done by he and his wife, who is also a sociologist, has shown that what prevents many millennials from entering into marriage is a lack of trust which comes from previous hurts they have experienced (divorce among family and friends, broken relationships, lack

of trust in institutions). However, many of them still believe in marriage but do not think it is something they can achieve for themselves and are settling for less.

Peg Vande Hey, Family & Married Life Coordinator, presented information about four marriage programs she would highly recommend for use by the parishes:

- *Beloved*
- *The Choice Wine: 7 Steps to a Superabundant Marriage*
- *Covenant of Love*
- *Intimate Graces: How Practicing the Works of Mercy Brings out the Best in Marriage*

Peg can be reached at 920-272-8315 or pvandehey@gbdioc.org for more information. The Diocese also has a new website for Natural Family Planning: www.ournaturalfamily.org.

A suggestion was made that it might be good to incorporate Catholic teaching on marriage into the Confirmation preparation program.

Bishop and the Council members thanked Deacon Tony and Peg for a very informative presentation.

Bishop's Appeal Overage Return/Cathedralicum

The current policy of the Bishop's Appeal is to return 50% of monies collected by a parish that is over the parish goal. The Diocese retains the remaining 50%. Josh Diedrich, Director of Bishop's Appeal, asked the Presbyteral Council if they would want to consider returning 55% of a parish's overage with the Diocese retaining 45%. After discussion about the pros and cons of making this change, it was recommended by the Council members to keep the policy at 50/50 and to revisit the issue in the future if similar requests are received.

Paul Kolbach, Chief Financial Officer, provided a financial report for the Cathedralicum. Last year's increase was 3.5%. This year Paul is recommending an increase of 2.5%.

After discussion, a motion was made to approve an increase to the Cathedralicum of 2.5%. Motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Father Dan Felton also took this opportunity to inform the Council members there will be no increase in the diocesan health insurance premiums for 2016/17. Over the past 10 years, diocesan health insurance premiums have increased an average of 2.5%. For comparison, national health insurance premiums have increased an average of 211%. Bishop expressed his gratefulness to our Catholic health care providers and diocesan personnel for their cooperation and hard work in keeping these health care costs affordable for our parishes and employees.

Our Lady of Good Help Shrine Enhancement

Walter Fountain, Operations Manager for the Shrine of Our Lady of Good Help, gave an overview of the vision for the future development of the Shrine. It is estimated 100,000 to 120,000 pilgrims will visit in the coming year. That number is expected to grow to 300,000 in the next ten years and eventually will reach 500,000. Our responsibility is to plan well in order to accommodate the increased number of pilgrims. It is important we are prepared to welcome everyone who visits.

The 20-year master plan includes a welcoming/orientation center, area for contemplative prayer, area for communal prayer, a vigil chapel, multi-use chapels, reconciliation chapel, and special events area.

The immediate need for handicapped accessibility, air conditioning in the chapel, and bringing concrete entrances and ramps up to code will be addressed in the near future, hopefully completed by May 1, 2016.

Bishop noted we are awaiting approval as a national shrine from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Multiple Themes

Due to time constraints, this agenda item was tabled. Father Dan will send information to members by e-mail and ask for their written responses in preparation for discussion at the next meeting.

Discussion of Priest/Pastoral Leader Meetings

Bishop felt the meetings with priests and pastoral leaders went very well. He received great insights from the September/October meetings and the January meetings were very affirming in support and enthusiasm for moving ahead with our focus on missionary discipleship.

The next two years will focus on discipleship formation for our priests, pastoral leaders, and curia. As missionary discipleship formation is eventually brought to the faithful, we should see a re-energizing of our parishes, increased Mass attendance, and a stronger faith life for families.

Bishop reiterated his desire that the Diocese-at-large move in one direction, with one focus, and that we simplify and streamline our efforts and programs.

Council members thanked Bishop for taking the time to meet with the priests and pastoral leaders.

Q & A

- Request for an update on Cathedral fund-raising campaign: Campaign is going well. We are nearing our first goal of \$2.3 million.
- Feedback on Dedication to the Holy Family mailing: Timing of mailing may have been a problem. Also, some concern the material appeared to be an appeal letter. Bishop commented it is important to continue to invite people to a parish Holy Hour. Many have lost a sense of the devotional life of the Church. We need to provide more catechesis on devotions.
- The Knights of Columbus have announced a new initiative: *Building the Domestic Church While Strengthening Our Parish*. A major focus of this initiative will be to support parish-based youth ministry activities.

The meeting adjourned 2:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Terri Wickman
Recording Secretary